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International relations

Chinese city may want to become family with Port Clinton

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PORT CLINTON — Port Clinton only stands to gain by forging partnerships with cities across the globe, officials say.

Officials of Shanhaiguan, China, are interested in becoming a sister city with Port Clinton, John Henry Fullen of Toledo Sister Cities International told Port Clinton City Council at a work session Tuesday.

The proposal is the result of Chinese representatives' visit to the city in May. Mayor Tom Brown took them on a tour of the area.

"They left here beaming from everybody they met," Fullen said. "Everyone went all out to

Background

What: Shanhaiguan, China proposes to be sister city with Port Clinton

Why: To promote business and exchange information

What's next: City Council reviews proposed agreement at the June 11 meeting. China officials also requested that Port Clinton officials visit their country in August. They visited Port Clinton in May.

show them hospitality."

Surprisingly, Fullen said, groups often say they enjoy Northwest Ohio better than big cities such as New York or Chicago because of Ohioans' willingness to spend time with them.

"The fact that the mayor of a city spent five, six or seven hours to make them feel welcome was the highest possible

honor they could have been given," he said.

Kara Smith, director of economic development for the Ottawa County Community Improvement Corporation, said the program is an opportunity to open doors and bring people to do business and exchange information.

"All the money in the world cannot buy having senior level

officials face-to-face," Smith said. County officials estimate that more than two-thirds of Ottawa County businesses participate in international markets.

Included in the proposal, which was submitted upon the group's return to Shanhaiguan, is an invitation for Port Clinton officials to visit China in August.

In return, the group would come to Port Clinton in September to officially sign an agreement and discuss economic cooperation.

The proposal agreement will be brought before council at its next regular meeting June 11.

Brown said council can ask for a motion to allow him to sign the proposal on behalf of the city.